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BRIEF REPLY

TO THE

Scriptural and Argumentative Part

OF

Mr. *BENNET*'s

BRIEF HISTORY

Of the Joint USE of

Precomposed Set Forms of Prayer.

8.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Whattoff Boulter*, at the *Angel*,
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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Comptroller and Agent-General for



MR. J. H. STUART

BRITISH MUSEUM

OF THE JOINT USE OF

Prescribed by the House of Commons

LONDON

Printed for J. H. Sturt, at the
British Museum, 1841.

THE
PREFACE.

THE following Papers contain a short Reply to the most material part of a late famous Book of a celebrated Author, who hath signaliz'd himself in the Controversy between the Church of England and the Dissenters. I have therein confin'd my self to Scripture and Reason, having a much greater Veneration for these, than I can have for the Ancient Fathers, especially they who only liv'd in the third and following Centuries. What Scripture therefore and Reason our Author has thought fit to produce, I have distinctly and fairly Consider'd, and return'd thereunto, (I hope) a satisfactory Answer: But as for his Quotations out of Antiquity, with his tedious Discourse thereupon, I leave that to be examin'd by some who are upon more Accounts than one better qualify'd for such an Undertaking, and have a greater Inclination to it than I. I shall at present content my self with saying, as our Author did in his Confutation of Popery, pag. 75, 76. ' Our Author indeed tells ' us of Fathers and Councils, which Names do ' make a great noise in the Ears of ignorant People: But we appeal to the Bible as the Rule of ' our Faith, and challenge him to prove what he

The P R E F A C E.

*' affirms from it. We are able, it's true, to fight
' at the other Weapon: But because this Method of
' proceeding is utterly needless, and very tedious;
' and because ordinary Persons are not competent
' Judges of such Matters; therefore we insist up-
' on Scripture Proofs. For this reason in the fol-
' lowing Papers, I shall think my self obliged to
' answer only those Arguments, which our Author
' draws from God's Word to prove his Opinion by.*

*And as for our Author's Discourse concerning
the Gift of Prayer (which is annex'd to his Histo-
ry) I don't see that it needs a Reply. For two
Things were incumbent upon him to prove, viz.
1. That this Gift is no part of that Assistance the
Spirit gives us in Prayer, and consequently is not
included in those Promises which secure to us the
Spirit's Assistance in the Discharge of that Duty:
And, 2. That they are not oblig'd to improve this
Gift on whom it's bestow'd, tho' it never had been
promised to them. But the Proof of either of these
our Author never attempts, and consequently his
copious Discourse on that Head must needs be alto-
gether Impertinent.*

*I shall add no more in the Preface, but only be-
speak the Candor of the Reader; which (being
conscious of my own Insufficiency) I am more incli-
ned to do, than to boast of this my Performance.*

A
R E P L Y
TO THE
Scriptural and Argumentative Part
O F
Mr. *B E N N E T*'s
H I S T O R Y O F P R A Y E R.

SUCH exceptionable Passages in Mr. *Bennet's* Book, as the Merits of the Cause are no way concern'd in, I design to make no Reflections upon : And therefore I meet with nothing in the first Chapter which I need to take notice of, except the concluding Sentence thereof.

' It's acknowledged on both sides, that *Pag. 13.*
' the want of such Decency of Expression as might have been conveniently attained, is
' such a Blemish in our Prayers, as we are oblig'd to
' remove. And I indeed own with our Author, that
' the Matter of Prayer ought to be decently expressed ; that is, our Language must be significant
' and proper, free from such Words as are either base,
' &c. But then I also think with him too, ' That
' God will without all doubt accept such Prayers as
' are expressed even indecently, when they are offer'd

‘ by a Person who is not able to do better ; and provided they be sincere and serious in offering up their ‘ Supplications to God.’ For *God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.* It’s Inward Truth and Sincerity which God doth principally require, the Heart of Man he chiefly regards : And if that be right in our Prayers to God, we need not doubt of acceptance. Though therefore in our Supplications to God we should guard against all Indecent Expressions, yet whilst we are careful to *remove this Blemish*, we should take care we don’t admit of a greater. I mean, we had better use our own Words and Expressions in Prayer, though they be not altogether so decent and proper, than either wholly omit the Duty, or use a Form compos’d by another, if we find by our Experience that this tends to render us formal. For there is nothing makes our Prayers more odious and abominable to God, than Formality and Hypocrisy do. And therefore I think I may venture to lay this down as a plain and undoubted Truth, *viz.* ‘ That we had ‘ better pray with less Proper Expressions, than with ‘ less Inward Devotion.

And I appeal to any Impartial Person , whether he would not be more mov’d by the Complaint of one in Distress, if made in his own Words, though not so proper and eloquent, than if he should present a Formal Petition to him ? And also whether he would not be less suspicious of such a one, who made his Complaints in this manner ; especially if he manifestly discover’d an Inward Sense and Feeling of his Calamity.

Doubtless, as a Variety of Phrase moves not God, so neither Eloquent Expressions, and the Exactness of the Composure. He would be a Cruel Father indeed, that should deny his Children Bread, because in asking it, they us’d some Childish Improper Expressions, or did not make a Neat Oration to him ; though their Carriage in other respects was every way

way very becoming. And can we then suppose that our Heavenly Father will be so captious? Surely he is not so much dispos'd to cavil at our Expressions in Prayer, as too many others are. And indeed for any to deride or quarrel with the Solemn Worship of God, because an Expression or two is made use of therein, which in their Opinion is not so proper and pertinent as some others that might have been used; or because the Method and Connection is not so very exact or apparent; This Practice, I say, will not only tempt others to despise and deride the Established Liturgy, but what is worse, will expose our Holy Religion, and encourage Deists and others to make the very same Objections against the Sacred Scripture it self.

Our Author in this Chapter generously grants, that he who prays without a Set Form of Words, does *truly* and *properly* pray. And Page 11. he says, 'Now these Devout Affections, these Holy Passions are not confined to one sort of Prayer only, but may *certainly* be felt, whether a Man pray in a Set Form of Words, or *conceive* a Prayer extempore.

These are such Concessions as I am very well pleased to meet with in such a Book, and from such an Author as this.

Three Things our Author undertakes to make out in this Book: 1st. That the Ancient Jews, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians never join'd in any Prayers, but precompos'd Set Forms only. 2^{dly}. That these precompos'd Set Forms in which they joined, were such as the respective Congregations were accustomed to, and thoroughly acquainted with. 3^{dly}, That their Practice warrants the Imposition of a National Precomposed Liturgy.

This is a very great and bold Undertaking indeed: And our Author must be a Person of extraordinary Abilities, if ever he perform or accomplish it.

In the Proof of the first of these Things, our Author proceeds by several Steps. And first he begins with the *Jews*, and endeavours to shew that they join'd in Precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer. For my part I should not have been very backward to have granted this to our Author, had he requested that Favour of me. But he thinks he can by the force of his Arguments constrain us to yield it, and therefore will be no way beholden to us for supposing what he affirms to be true.

Our Author tells us, P. 15. 'He does not think it worth his while to derive the use of Precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer either from *Adam*, whom (as some Rabbins inform us) Tradition makes the Author of the 92d Psalm: Or *Noah*, a Prayer of whose composing is given us by Mr. Gregory out of the *Arabic Catena*; or *Abraham*, to whom that Form of Prayer is attributed, which Mr. Selden recites out of an *Arabick MS.* These and the like Authorities, I confess, I cannot value, or build my Belief on.' And so far indeed I think our Author is very much in the right of it. For such incredible Stories as these would only create in our Minds a suspicion of that, in the Proof of which they're alledged. It was therefore prudently done in our Author not to insist upon such groundless and unlikely Conjectures as these, lest instead of serving his Cause by this Means, he had done that which might have been highly prejudicial to it. And for this very Reason perhaps our Author had done well, if he had not laid so much stress upon the Fabulous *Talmud*, as I find he does afterwards. Whether this be not to build his Belief upon *such like* Authorities, I leave to the Judgment of others.

But however, since our Author lays no stress upon these, let us next see what those strong Arguments are,

are, which he thinks, may be safely depended upon. All that he mentions from Scripture, may be reduc'd to these two. 1. ' Their singing of *Psalms*. 2dly. That Form of Prayer precompos'd by God himself, which was to be us'd in ' the Expiation of an uncertain Murder. To each of these I return the following Answers.

i. As for singing of *Psalms*, that is not properly Praying: It's true, some of the *Psalms* contain abundance of Requests and Petitions in them, and for that reason are properly enough styl'd precatory ones. But yet the singing of these is never call'd *Praying* in our usual manner of speaking. Thus tho' some of the *Psalms* are Instructive or Doctrinal; yet singing of these is not properly Teaching or Preaching. The fifth *Psalms* as well as some others, is one continued Speech to the Lord: But is it not very improper to say, that those Persons are *Praying* who are singing that *Psalms*, or another of the same Nature?

Besides, the very Nature of the Work, the manner of performing this Duty is such, as that it is absolutely necessary that the Words or Form thereof shou'd be precompos'd. But the Case does manifestly differ in Prayer. And therefore I think this Instance (which as to the Matter of Fact I own to be true) is not very pertinent.

2dly, As for the other Instance our Author has mention'd, *Deut.* 21. 7, 8. It's but a very short Prayer indeed: And it's plain is design'd rather for a Political use, than for their publick Religious Worship. And it's not unlikely, that this Prayer (consider'd as a Form, and as given upon such an occasion) was of the same Nature with those other Rites which were enjoin'd by God to the *Jews*, tho' they had no intrinsic Usefulness in them. Besides, it must be observ'd, that this Prayer as well as the *Psalms* are of a Divine, and not a Human Composure; (which
by

by the way may be apply'd to the Lord's Prayer too.) So that our Author has produc'd no Instances of their joining in a Form of Prayer Compos'd and Prescrib'd by Man: And yet only such Instances as these are exactly parallel, and consequently wou'd have been the most pertinent Ones.

I might add, That our Author cannot shew us how oft, nor has he *prov'd*, that they *ever actually* join'd in this Prayer. They are order'd to do so, when such an Occasion happen'd: And for my part, I question not but they had frequent Occasion to use it. But one that requires such clear, direct, and positive Proof from others, should always produce such himself. He that will be pleas'd with nothing but perfect Demonstration from others, should always demonstrate himself; or else, who does he think will regard him?

And now, having briefly examined our Author's Scriptural Arguments, I shall not stay to make any Remarks upon his own or others uncertain Conjectures. The only certain Account we can have of the Practice of the Ancient *Jews*, is to be met with in Scripture: Other Testimonies are so very obscure and uncertain, that it's not worth one's while to enquire into them; and therefore I shall not waste my Time in a tedious Examination thereof. Nor shall I stay to enquire what Credit is due to the *Talmud*; or how far the Testimonies produced out of it, are fit to be rely'd and depended upon.

Some, as well skill'd in that part of Learning as our Author himself, have flatly deny'd, That the *Jews* ever us'd any Set Forms of Prayer at all; and have challeng'd the World to prove it: Such as Dr. Owen, Dr. Collins, Mr. Cotton, and others. So that to the Opinion of some Learned Men, I oppose the Opinion of others: But which of 'em are in the right, I shall not pretend to determine. I am for Scripture and Reason, and therefore resolve not to concern

concern my self in any other kind of Quotations whatever. It will be enough for me to bring from the Scripture as good and pertinent Proof of the *Jews* joining in *Extempore* Prayer, as our Author has done for the other : Which in its proper Place I shall endeavour to do.

But whatever the *Jewish* Practice or Opinion was, I don't perceive that we Christians are much concern'd in that matter. More especially, the Practice of the Ancient *Jews*, in the more corrupted State of their Church, deserves but little Regard, any farther than it was warranted by the Word of God, or the Direction of his Inspired Prophets. For Forms of Prayer (as their other Carnal Rites and Ceremonies were,) might only be fitted to the Church's Minority, and so not be so suitable to that more perfect and Spiritual State it has attained to under the Gospel. Let us therefore next enquire, what was the Practice of our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians.

As for our Saviour, our Author tells us, ' There is ' not the least Question to be made, but that he ' continued always in Communion with the *Jewish* ' Church, and was Zealous and Exemplary in their ' Publick Devotions, and consequently took all Opportunities of joining in those precomposed Set ' Forms of Prayer, which were daily us'd in the *Jewish* ' Congregations. And the Practice of the Apostles, and our Lord's other Disciples, was doubtless ' the same, till our Saviour's Ascension. But this Proof affords no Satisfaction to me, for the following Reasons.

First, Our Author has brought no sufficient Proof, that the *Jews* ever us'd any precomposed Set Forms of Prayer, in their Publick Religious Worship. (*Psalms* being always excepted, for the Reasons I have mention'd already.) The single Instance that's produc'd from the Bible, relates not at all to their Publick

Publick Religious Assemblies : And our Author's other Quotations are not to be too much depended upon. So that our Saviour might live in full and constant Communion with the *Jewish* Church, and yet never join in one precompos'd Set Form of Prayer, for ought that fairly appears to the contrary.

Secondly, That our Saviour and his Apostles did sometimes go to the *Jewish* Temple and Synagogues, I readily grant : But how far, and how oft they join'd in their Worship, can never be determin'd with any Certainty. That they were *Total* and *Constant* Conformists, can never be prov'd from the Scriptures : Yea, I think it would be a matter of no great Difficulty, evidently to shew they were not. So that tho' it shou'd be granted, that the *Jews* did use some Set Forms of Prayer ; yet it's *gratis dictum*, said, but not proved, 'That our Saviour took all Opportunities of joining in those precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer. And now since this is the only Proof our Author pretends to give of our Saviour's using a Form, I hope he'll not for the future insert his Name among those, who join'd in Set Forms of Prayer ; unless he resolve to believe without a Proof ; a Crime which he so severely exposes in others.

Thirdly, I shall add, That supposing our Saviour did join in some *Jewish* Set Forms of Prayer ; yet it do's not follow from hence, that he judg'd them to have any intrinsick Goodness or Expediency in 'em : No more than it can be fairly inferr'd, That Forms of Prayer (in the Judgment of the Dissenters) are to be *preferr'd* before *Extempore* ones ; because they sometimes join with the *Establish'd Church* in the Use of their Liturgy ; or because they may join constantly in it, when they have no Opportunity of going elsewhere. The *Lawfulness* of Forms, not their *Preferableness*, is all that can hence be inferr'd.

ferr'd. For according to this Supposition ; our Saviour must either join in these Set Forms of Prayer, or else have no Communion at all with the *Jewish* Church, in that Part of their Religious Worship. So that as I said before, the main Question is, What the Practice of our Saviour and his Apostles were, in their Christian Assemblies ?

Now our Author is of the Opinion, That our Lord's Apostles, and other Disciples, did use precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer in their Christian Assemblies. ' This he'll make appear,
' 1st. From their joining in the Use of P. 28.
' the Lord's-Prayer. 2^{dly}. From their
' joining in the Use of *Psalms*. 3^{dly}. From their
' joining in the Use of divers precompos'd Set Forms
' of Prayer, besides the Lord's-Prayer and *Psalms*.
Our Author speaks to each of these in their Order ; and I shall accordingly follow him.

First then, he says, ' It is sufficiently
' evident, that they join'd in the Use of *Ibid*.
' the Lord's-Prayer, from our Saviour's
' having commanded them to do so ; as appears from
' *Mat. 6. 9.* which ought to be render'd, *Thus there-*
' *fore pray ye,* that is, Pray in these Words which
' follow.

It's generally observ'd, that that Command of our Saviour's, *Mat. 6. 9.* is given in reference to secret Prayer, which our Saviour had before, *v. 6.* been discoursing about : And therefore it is not so very apparent, that our Lord's Disciples were oblig'd, by virtue of this Command, to *join* in that Prayer which follows. And since our Author confines his Discourse to Publick or Joint-Prayer alone ; this place of Scripture seems not to be so proper and pertinent. But not to insist upon this, I shall only enquire into the Reason our Author has to affirm, That our Saviour commanded his Disciples to pray in these very Words which follow. For if I can
fairly

fairly shew that this Reason is insufficient ; then the Assertion which is grounded upon it, must have no solid Foundation.

Our Author has either chang'd his Judgment, since he wrote his Abridgment ; or else never was of the same Opinion with that Doctor, *Abr.* p. 50. whose Case he abridg'd. For now, directly contrary to what he there had affirm'd, he tells us, That our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. 9. commanded his Disciples to *Pray in these Words which follow.* But methinks our Author had better kept to his former Opinion, unless he could have given a stronger Reason, why he had alter'd his Judgment. For tho' it should be granted that the Particle *ὅτι* may be render'd *thus*, and that it is *once* taken in this Sense by the *Septuagint* ; yet it is equally certain, that it may be translated *After this manner.* This is at least as frequent and genuine a Sense of the Word as the other : And therefore our Author had some Reason to say, as in his Abridgment, p. 50. 'I confess, we cannot know from that Text, whether 'Christ commands us to use that very Form ;' and no Reason at all (that I can perceive) to change his Opinion.

But upon our Author's Espousing this new Opinion, some new Difficulties do arise, which perhaps are not so easily remov'd, as he is apt to imagine. For (unless we suppose that there were two different Forms enjoin'd by our Saviour, which there is not the least Probability of) it will be hard to determine what *these very Words* are, which we are oblig'd to make use of : For the Words in *St. Matthew* and *Luke* do differ not a little from one another. Four Petitions, together with the Preface, (as our Author observes) are indeed exactly the same. But the other two Petitions are differently express'd, tho' the Matter be one and the same ; and the Doxology recorded by *Matthew*, is wholly omitted by *Luke*. In
order

order to remove this Difficulty, our Author observes, That the Lord's- P. 29.
Prayer was deliver'd in the *Syriac* Language: ' And therefore it's no wonder, if two different Persons (*viz.* the Evangelists *Matthew* and *Luke*) who render'd the same into *Greek* at different times, and in different Places, made use of some different Expressions: But tho' the Expressions differ, yet the Sense is exactly the same, and the *Syriac* Words of our Lord are equally capable of both Translations.

But there is one thing I gladly would be inform'd of; and, that is, how our Author comes to know what the *Syriac* Original was, (supposing that our Saviour spoke in that Language) and which way he learnt the *Syriac* words of our Lord, which he says are equally capable of both Translations. Or how will our Author ever be able to prove that the words in the *Syriac* Language were exactly the same? Sure I am, in that *Syriac* Version of the New Testament, which we have in the *Polyglot* Bible, the Words of this Prayer in *Matthew* and *Luke* do differ one from another; as any one may see that will give themselves the trouble of consulting the same. Besides, it must be observed, that both the Evangelists were inspired Persons. Now if Christ had design'd to bind us up to the use of these very words; it seems rational to suppose, that these Translators would have been so directed by the Spirit of God, as to agree not only in Sense, but Expression too. And indeed (if our Author's Opinion be true) it will be hard to determine what liberty may be allowed to Translators with respect to this Prayer, and to fix those bounds which in their Translation of it, none must dare to transgress. Methinks, if it was our Saviour's Design to tie us up to the use of these very Words, then none but a *literal* Translation shou'd be receiv'd or approv'd of.

But

But however, this Answer does not at all remove the Difficulty relating to the Doxology, which is entirely omitted by the Evangelist *Luke*. If the *Syriac* Original had been exactly the same, it's not to be imagin'd, that so considerable a part wou'd have been quite overlook'd, even by an inspir'd Translator. The entire Omission hereof can't be attributed to his translating the *Syriac* Words of our Lord at a different Time and Place from the other Evangelist. And therefore to this Objection some other Answer must be invented : That Reply which is afterward offer'd hereunto by our Author, shall within a little be fairly and fully Consider'd.

In *Pag. 31*. I find another Argument alledg'd by our Author to prove, That the Lord's Prayer, was given as a Form, and not a Directory. But I can scarce persuade my self that our Author is in good earnest when he makes use of such trifling Arguments : We can't but think, that what the Disciple ask'd, our Saviour granted. Now the Disciple did not ask a Directory for Prayer, for then he wou'd have said, Lord tell us what to pray for, as *John* told his Disciples what they must Pray for. But he says, Lord teach us to Pray, that is, tell us what Form of Prayer we shall use. Now if any Argument at all can be fetch'd from these Words, *Lord teach us to Pray* ; in my Judgment it must rather be against our Author and his Opinion, than for them. For I think the most natural Paraphrase that can be made of these Words, must be to this purpose, *Lord give us some Directions about the Duty of Prayer* ; and not, *Tell us what Form we shall use*. And therefore there is more reason from these Words to suppose that he gave it them as a Directory, than as a Form : This being in my Opinion the most direct Answer to the Disciple's Request. Besides, was I fond of this way of Arguing, I might with much more probability retort your Reason upon you, and tell you,
That

That had the Disciple desir'd our Saviour's Form, he wou'd have said, *Lord teach me thy Prayer, or thy Form of Prayer,* or give me that Form which thou art wont to give thy Disciples: But instead of this he says, *Lord teach us to Pray.* Our Author indeed supposes that St. *John* taught his Disciples a particular Form, and so did our Saviour too. But there is not the least Foundation in the Text for such a Conjecture as this. We meet with no such Form, nor the least Intimation thereof in the Scripture: And therefore we may better suppose, that *John* taught his Disciples to pray, by prescribing them some Directions concerning this Duty; and so retort upon our Author this part of his Argument too.

Our Author adds, 'When this Disciple desir'd his Master to teach him to P. 32. pray, our Saviour repeats his old Form that was given a Year and half before. So that it's plain, that the Lord's-Prayer was one Settled Form, which he gave his Disciples as Occasion offer'd.

But will it not amount to the same, if we suppose this Prayer to have been a Settled Directory? Why mayn't we as well suppose this to be the Reason why it was twice repeated at different Times and Occasions? And surely this Opinion is the more probable, if we consider that the Evangelists do exactly agree in the Matter and Method of the Petitions, tho' in their Expressions of them they somewhat vary from one another.

Our Author also tells us, 'That the Person that ask'd our Saviour to teach him and his Companions to pray, was probably a new Convert. This also seems inconsistent with that Account we have of this matter, in the Third Chapter of the *London Cases Abridg'd*, p. 50. And for my part, I can discover nothing at all in the Text, or the Context, to render this Supposition of our Author's any way

probable. We have not therein the least Intimation of any such thing, but rather the contrary. We have no Account of any New Converts in the foregoing Chapter. And this Disciple speaks not in his own Name, but in the Name of the rest, *Lord* (says he) *teach us to pray*; and Christ also directs his Speech not to any particular Person, but to them all in general: *When YE pray*, &c. So that our Author must suppose them all to have been but newly converted, or else his Supposition will not serve his Design. But how unlikely this is, I refer to impartial Judges. I am persuaded, that any unprejudic'd Person, who peruses the Text and the Context, will be inclin'd to believe, that these Disciples our Saviour speaks to, were such as had been his constant Attendants, and had liv'd some time in his Family; and not such as had been but lately converted.

But it's easy to discover the Reason why this Opinion is espous'd by our Author, and why he is pleas'd to call it a *probable* one: It is in order to evade the Force of an Argument, which he could not otherways answer, but by making such groundless (not to say evidently false) Suppositions as these. For if this particular Form was so long a time before given by our Saviour to his Disciples, and they constantly made use of the same; how was it possible that any of 'em should be ignorant of it? Our Author is aware of this, and therefore intimates to us, that this way of Reasoning equally concludes against its being a Settled Directory. But in my Opinion, there is a very great difference. For if the Lord's-Prayer had been given only as a Directory to the Disciples, it's very possible they might have forgot the whole, or some part, or at least the Order and Method of the Petitions; which could not well be, if they had constantly used the same as a Form. Or the Disciples might here desire some more particular Directions about the Duty of Prayer; and yet our Saviour

Saviour not judge it proper to give them any further Instructions at present, but barely to repeat his Settled Directory. They might need to have our Saviour's former Directions reviv'd and inculcated; and might also desire some further Instructions about the right Discharge of this Duty. Either of these Suppositions is much more likely and probable, than that of our Author's. Besides, it's possible enough that these might be old Disciples; and yet not have heard our Saviour when he preach'd on the *Mount*, or for some other Reasons might be Strangers to this Directory. But it is not to be suppos'd, that they could have liv'd for any time in our Saviour's Family, and yet be ignorant of that particular Form, which was so constantly us'd by all the Disciples, yea, was the very Badge of their Discipleship. Tho', after all, I know not why our Saviour might not at different times prescribe the same Directions relating to Prayer, with no greater a Variation, than there is between the Evangelists; even tho' this Prayer was not a Settled Directory. How great an Affinity is there between our Saviour's Discourse, *Luke 6.* and the Sermon he preach'd on the *Mount*? And yet some Judicious Interpreters think, that these Things were spoke at different Times and Occasions.

Our Author, in the next place, endeavours to shew, That the Doxology's being recorded by *St. Matthew*, and omitted by *Luke*, is no Reason at all against its being given and design'd for

a Form. ' For, says he, if the Doxo- P. 33.

logy is a Part of the Original Text of

' *St. Matthew*, then the very utmost that can be con-
' cluded from it is this, That our Lord, tho' he com-
' mands the Use of the Lord's-Prayer, do's not in-
' sist upon the Use of the Doxology, but leaves it
' indifferent, or at least orders it to be sometimes
' us'd and sometimes omitted.

But to say that Our Lord (in *Mat. 6. 9.*) commands the Use of the Lord's-Prayer, (that is, the Use of these very Words which follow, as that Text is explain'd by our Author;) and yet *do's not insist upon the Use of the Doxology*; is as plain a Contradiction as any thing can be: Since the Doxology contains a considerable Part of those Words which our Author supposes we are oblig'd to use by that Precept. If we are bound by the Command of our Saviour, *Mat. 6. 9. to Pray in these Words which follow*; how can the Omission of so considerable a Part of *these Words*, be an *Indifferent* thing? To reconcile these together, is beyond my Power; and therefore I leave it to Mr. Bennet.

‘ But however, may it not be sometimes us'd, and ‘ sometimes omitted; since we are commanded to ‘ use the Words recorded both by *Matthew* and *Luke*? According to this Supposition, it's plain, the Words in *St. Matthew* and *Luke* are two distinct Forms of Prayer, and are not really one and the same. But this Supposition has no Probability in it. It is scarce to be suppos'd, that our Saviour would give two distinct Forms of Prayer to his Disciples, that differ so little from one another. Besides, our Author will not be able to reconcile this Opinion with that *Hypothesis* which he himself has embraced: For he supposes, that *John the Baptist* compos'd a Form for his Disciples, (that is, one particular Form, as a Badge of their Discipleship;) and so did our Saviour too. P. 31.

‘ But (says our Author) it's utterly
P. 33. ‘ absurd to omit the Use of the whole,
‘ because the latter part of it is not en-
‘ join'd to be constantly repeated with the rest. But I think, scarce any thing can be more *absurd*, than this way of arguing: For if the constant Use of the latter part of the Prayer, *Mat. 6. 9, &c.* be not enjoin'd; then it's plain, the *Constant Use of no Part*

at all is required : Because that Command, *Mat. 9. 6.* equally reaches to all and every Part of that Prayer which follows ; and therefore, if we are hereby bound to the constant Use of any Part of this Prayer, we must be hereby equally oblig'd to the constant Use of the whole : And if that Command don't infer a Necessity of Using the *latter Words* of the Prayer, then it's plain, we are not oblig'd indispensibly by it to the constant Use of *any* of those Words and Phrases which follow. Had Christ requir'd the Use of the rest, and not enjoin'd the Doxology ; then what our Author says, wou'd have had somewhat of Reason in it : But the Doxology is equally enjoin'd with the rest, and therefore if that may be safely omitted, why not the whole ?

Our Author, in the next place, pretends to instance in a parallel Case ; *P. 34.* tho' so blind am I, that I can see no Parity in it. Had the People of the *Jews* been oblig'd to repeat *these very Words* which were deliver'd by God on the *Mount*, and yet been left at an utter Uncertainty about that particular Form of Words which then and there was deliver'd ; their Case indeed had been hard enough, and not unlike that which now I argue against. But there is no Foundation at all for either of these Suppositions. For it seems probable, that in *Exod. 20.* we have the very Words which were deliver'd by God on the *Mount* ; but in *Deut. 6.* *Moses* repeating these Commandments again, did not think himself oblig'd to use that particular Form of Words, in which they at first were deliver'd : He thought it sufficient, to keep to the Sense and Meaning thereof. And therefore they are the *same*, only with respect to the *Matter* and *Substance* thereof. The People of the *Jews* were not commanded to repeat *these very Words*, either in the Sixth of *Deuteronomy*, or Twentieth of *Exodus* : We meet with no such Precepts as this. And yet, if our

Author wou'd have shewn this to be a Parallel Case, he ought to have prov'd that the *Jews* were commanded to repeat the very Words that are recorded in both the forementioned Places, though different from one another, whilst at the same time they were strictly oblig'd to use only that particular Form of Words which was deliver'd by God on the Mount. But since our Author attempts not to prove, that the *Jews* were confin'd to any particular Set Form of Words ; yea since the contrary manifestly appears from the forecited Places of Scripture, it's plain that nothing can be more remote from the purpose, than what our Author is pleas'd to call a Parallel Case. However let us see how he argues upon it.

Let us suppose that the *Jews* should
 Pag. 35. argue as our Adversaries do, ' That the
 ' Ten Commandments could not be in-
 ' tended to be studied and read by them as the Sum-
 ' mary of their Duty, because then God would cer-
 ' tainly have deliver'd them in the same Words, and
 ' not have alter'd and added as we find he did : Would
 ' our Adversaries think they argued right? And con-
 ' sequently they themselves must not argue, that
 ' Christ ~~did~~ not intend the Lord's Prayer to be used
 ' as a Summary of Devotion by his Disciples, because
 ' he would not then have added the *Doxology* in one
 ' Place, and left it out in another.' But here there
 is so great a distance between the Premises and the
 Conclusion, that he must be much longer-sighted than
 I, that can see from the one to the other. Methinks
 the fairest way of arguing would have been to this
 purpose ; As the *Jews* were bound to read the Com-
 mandments, and to study the Substance and Matter
 thereof, their whole Duty both to God and their
 Neighbour being briefly summ'd up in the same ; so
 Christians are oblig'd to read the Lord's Prayer, and
 study the Matter and Method thereof, though nei-
 ther the *Jews* nor the *Christians* were in either of these
 Cases

Cases confin'd to any Particular Words or Expressions. And that the Lord's Prayer ought to be read and studied as a Summary of our Devotion, will be deny'd by no Dissenter I know of : Nor do I know any that have not the freedom to use it as such. But that we are bound to use the very Words recorded both in *Matthew* and *Luke*, tho' we are ty'd up to one particular Form, cannot be inferr'd from this or any thing else ; for indeed 'tis a Natural Impossibility.

Our Author in the next place argues against us from our own Principles, and *Pag. 35.* tells us, ' That the omission of the *Doxology* in the Evangelist *Luke* is as good an Argument against its being a Directory for the Matter of Prayer, as it's against its being an Establish'd Set Form of Prayer ——— For certainly our Saviour would always direct alike, and not order us to add a *Doxology* to the end of our Prayers in one place, and omit that Order in the other.

But 1st, According to our Opinion we may very safely suppose that this Order (touching the *Doxology*) was not omitted by Christ, though it be not recorded by the Evangelist *Luke*. For tho' it be certain that the Inspired Penmen of Scripture wrote nothing but what was certainly true ; yet it is universally own'd that several Passages omitted by one, are supply'd by another. And consequently the compleat full Account of this Matter must be gather'd from both the Evangelists compared one with another, and not from either the one or the other alone. The two Evangelists don't in the least contradict one another. That is, as to their Sense and Meaning they exactly agree (and that's sufficient for us) though they differ in their Expressions. Only the *Doxology* is omitted by the one, and supply'd by the other.

2^{dly}, Our Author's Argument is manifestly grounded upon a Mistake, viz. That our Saviour would always direct alike. It's true our Saviour's Directions are ne-

ver inconsistent with, or contradictory to one another. And therefore in this Sense indeed he *always directs alike*. But to suppose that our Saviour's Directions are not *always equally full and compleat*, carries no absurdity in it: Yea the contrary Opinion is evidently against both Scripture and Reason. If we would be fully instructed in the discharge of any Duty whatever, we must consult all those Places of Scripture where we meet with any Directions about it: For it is not to be imagin'd that *every Place contains every Direction* about the performance of it.

3dly, If we suppose the Lord's Prayer to be only a Directory as to the *Matter* of Prayer, then the omission of the *Doxology* is not so very considerable: Because we are directed in other Petitions, and particularly in the first, to ascribe all Praise and Glory to God. And provided this be done in our Prayers, it is not so very material whether it be in the beginning, middle, or conclusion of them; there is no absolute necessity for our doing this just at *the End*. Nor can I well understand for what Reason our Author affirms that Christ orders us to add a *Doxology* to *the End* of our Prayers; if we suppose the Lord's Prayer to be only a Directory as to the *Matter* thereof.

'But (says our Author) the difference of our Prayers will be every whit as great in following this Pattern, by sometimes omitting, and at other times adding a *Doxology* to the end of our Prayers; as it can possibly be by using the Lord's Prayer sometimes with, and at other times without the *Doxology*.' This has been sufficiently answered already: And yet, if true, I can't imagine what it is to the purpose. Our Supposition admits of a Difference, but according to your Hypothesis, there must none at all be allowed. We never thought our selves oblig'd to use the very same Words or Method in Prayer, or to pray for every Part of the Matter of

of Prayer at every Time and Occasion. We are careful indeed that our Prayers (as to the Matter thereof) be not disagreeable to this excellent Pattern; but this is no way inconsistent with a *Variety* of Matter, Method and Phrase. But if we are bound invariably to use that entire Form prescribed by our Saviour, then I can't see but the least Omission must be unlawful. Here's no room left for any Variation at all.

Our Author in the next place spends several Pages in answering the Argument that's grounded upon *John 16. 24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.* The way here taken to remove the Objection is quite different from the Method that's taken in the Abridgment. And indeed our Author manifestly betrays the badness of his Cause, when after all he's constrain'd to offer such violence to so plain and easy a Scripture as this. 'For by *asking nothing* (says he) 'is only meant their not asking the Extraordinary 'Gifts of the Spirit' He that will take the liberty of thus wresting the Scripture, and pressing it into his Service against the Natural Genuine Sense and Meaning thereof, is indeed scarce fit to be argued with. Any one who considers that Passage, and peruses the Context, can't but observe that these Words *in my Name*, do carry an Emphasis in them. And the plain Meaning of that Place of Scripture is this, *viz.* 'That 'hitherto they had not made that express use of *Christ's* 'Mediatory Office, nor that formal Mention of his 'Name, which now they are directed and commanded to do.' And methinks the Parallel Places of Scripture that's quoted by our Author himself, might have induc'd him to put the same Interpretation upon it. And indeed (to use his own Words upon another Occasion) 'Our Saviour's Words cannot be understood 'otherwise than I have explain'd them, without wresting them from their natural and even necessary Signification. Which Practice, if it be allow'd, will
'subvert

‘subvert the Gospel, and enervate the force of every Precept in it.’ So that I am still more and more confirmed in my Opinion, that the Lord’s Prayer was given only as a Directory, and even as such was suited and adapted to the Present State of the Church. To me it appears highly improbable that our Saviour should give this, as his particular Form, to be the Badge of his Discipleship ; when his Blessed Name is not so much as mentioned in it. Since this seems to be recommended to us in the forementioned Scripture, was afterward us’d by the Apostles themselves, and has ever since been universally practis’d by the Church in all Ages, in all their Solemn Addresses to God.

Our Author observes that we may be said in three respects to ask in Christ’s Name. I shall only take notice of the Second, because it’s in that Sense chiefly I apprehend the Phrase to be taken in the forecited

Pag. 37. Text. To ask in Christ’s Name, is to ask for his sake. ‘But now (says our Au-

Pag. 38. ‘thor) none can more properly ask the Father for Christ’s sake, than he who in ‘obedience to Christ’s Command, and

‘out of pure Love to him, offers up that Form which ‘the Son commanded him.’ But then why does our Saviour tell his Apostles, that *hitherto they had not asked in his Name?* To be sure if the Lord’s Prayer was prescribed as a Form, they had offered it up several times before now, out of pure Love and Obedience to him. But I’ll tell you who in my Opinion do more properly ask the Father for the sake of his Son, viz. they who firmly believe in their Heart that it’s only upon the account of Christ’s Satisfaction and Merits that their Prayers can be accepted or answered; and accordingly do *explicitly* and *entirely* depend upon him alone for acceptance. And what they believe with their Heart, they also confess with their Mouth, expressly acknowledging their entire dependance upon

Christ’s

Christ's Satisfaction, and professing their firm and stedfast reliance upon him. And indeed these two seem to be necessarily join'd and connected together. For in our Supplications to God, we can't well with our Heart explicitly rely upon Christ, unless with our Mouth we expressly mention his Name. Since in our Prayers to an all-seeing God, our Hearts and Mouths, our Words and Thoughts should always go together.

I don't think that the bare naming of Christ, of his Merits, &c. in our Prayers to God, is chiefly design'd in these Places of Scripture, but the Inward firm Reliance of the Heart and Soul thereupon: And the making *express* mention thereof in our Prayers, as it is very becoming those that are Christians, so it is *consequently* necessary, that is, where this inward Reliance is; and where it is very explicit, there will be some suitable outward Expressions of it.

Now there's a manifest difference between Asking *in the Name* of Christ, or Asking *for his Sake*; when we make our Address to Man, and when we speak to our Heavenly Father: The not observing of which, seems to have occasion'd our Author's Mistake. When we ask any thing of Man for the Sake of Christ, our meaning is, That we desire them to grant our Request, out of Love and Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has enjoin'd them this Duty. When we pray to God in the Name of Christ, our meaning is, That we only desire and expect to be answer'd, upon the Account of his Satisfaction and Merits; acknowledging that it is not for any Desert of our own, but merely for the Merits of Christ, that we hope to receive from God any Blessing we pray for. 'To pray in Christ's Name, is to pray in his Mediation, depending upon his Merits and Intercession for the Acceptance of our Prayers. *Abridg. p. 51.* These properly (in the usual and Scriptural Sense of the Phrase) Pray in Our Saviour's Name, Ask for his Sake;

Sake ; more properly than they , who offer up the Lord's Prayer to God, out of Love and Obedience to him. For, *Asking for Christ's Sake*, do's not so much respect our Love and Obedience to him , as our Depending upon him alone for Acceptance.

But (says our Author) ' We must
P. 40. ' grant, that in the Texts above-cited,
' we are forbid to *ask* any thing other-
' wise than in Christ's Name : ' Which is an Assertion
that our Author thinks will be attended with many
Absurdities, especially if the express mentioning of
our Saviour's Name, be included as part of the mean-
ing. ' For then the Use of the Lord's-Prayer, Sing-
' ing some Parts of *David's Psalms*, short Ejaculations,
' and that Prayer of the Apostles, *Act* 4. 24. would
' be all of 'em sinful.' Thus our Author thinks he has
demonstrated upon his Adversary's own Principles,
' That *that* (*viz.* expressly mentioning our Saviour's
' Name) cannot possibly be the Sense of the Phrase
' (*viz.* *Asking in his Name*) in those Texts upon which
' the Objection is built. But our Author's Demon-
strations many times fall short of probable Arguments :
And that in the present Case it is really so, I think,
may be very easily prov'd upon our Author, and that
from his own Principles too.

Our Author is of the Opinion, That in *Luk.* 11. 2.
when we pray, we are commanded to use the very
Words of the Prayer which follows. And conse-
quently, 1. Every Prayer where this is not us'd ; and
2dly, Singing the Precatory Part of the *Psalms* ; and
3dly, Such short Ejaculations, as, *Lord have mercy up-
on me*, &c. and 4thly, That Prayer, *Acts* 4. 23. All
these, I say, according to our Author's Opinion, and
Way of Arguing, are downright unlawful. The Dif-
ficulty in both Cases is exactly the same : And the
same Solution that serves for the one, will also do for
the other. Whenever therefore our Author will
shew us , how he can reconcile the Lawfulness of
each

each of these Practices with this Opinion of his ; perhaps we shall *then* also be able to shew, that each of these Things may be Lawful enough ; and yet we be commanded in the forementioned Places of Scripture *expressly* to mention our Saviour's Name, &c. in our Prayers to our Heavenly Father.

For my part, I don't think it absolutely necessary, *expressly* to mention our Saviour's Name in *every* Prayer ; especially if very short, and only Ejaculatory. Nor can the absolute Necessity hereof be fairly infer'd from *Job.* 16, 24. or any other Text which our Author has mention'd ; even supposing the Interpretation which I have given thereof to be true. For tho' our Saviour now directs them more *expressly* to mention his Name than they had done heretofore, and to rely more *explicitly* on him : Yet he does not hereby lay them under an absolute Necessity of doing this in *every particular Prayer*. Notwithstanding this Advice and Direction, (in some cases) a *virtual implicit dependance* upon this great Mediator may doubtless suffice. As God's Glory must be the Chief End of our Lives and Actions ; and yet we are not oblig'd *explicitly* to design and intend it in every particular Action, tho' in any *considerable Undertaking* it is doubtless our Duty to do so.

Tho' in an Ejaculatory Prayer, and perhaps in some other Cases too, it mayn't be necessary *expressly* to mention our Saviour's Name, or *explicitly* to depend upon his Satisfaction and Merits : Yet I think this is highly convenient at least, if not absolutely necessary, in all our *Solemn Addresses* to God. The Omission of this must needs be a great Defect ; Tho' I will not say it is so great a Defect, as to render it simply unlawful to join with those who use so defective a Prayer, or that a Person had not better use such a Prayer than none at all.

In short then, as our Author supposes that *Luke* 11. 2. we are commanded when we pray to use the Lord's Prayer ;

Prayer ; and yet do's not think it necessary to annex it to every Grace or every Ejaculation, &c. So I also think that in *John* 16. 24. we are required *explicitly* to depend upon Christ in our Prayers, and *expressly* to mention his Name ; and yet do not think that we are hereby oblig'd to mention his Name in every Ejaculation, &c.

But by this time I suppose our Author will be ready to think that he has caught me fast with the other Horn of his dreadful Dilemma ; and I expect to be told that I have fairly giv'n up the cause ; since I own that it is not unlawful to use the Lord's-Prayer : But since in using the Lord's-Prayer we can't ask in Christ's Name in that Sense which is recommended to us in the forecited Places of Scripture ; I appeal to all impartial Persons whether it be probable in the lowest degree, ' That our Saviour gave this very ' Form to his Disciples as the lasting Badge of their ' Discipleship whereby they were distinguish'd from ' the Disciples of others. ' If in one respect it be not a sufficient Directory (to the present State of the Church ;) how can we rationally suppose, that our Saviour design'd it should be perpetually us'd as a Form ?

But perhaps it will be objected by some, That the Dissenting Ministers do (many of 'em) use the Lord's-Prayer in their *Solemn* Addresses to God ; and is not this inconsistent with that Interpretation which I have put upon that Place of Scripture, *John* 16. 24. ? I mention this because I think our Author is plainly of this Opinion. ' For (says he) if it be unlawful to ask of the Father without mentioning his Son's Intercession and Merits, then it would be unlawful to hold Communion with the best and wisest of the Dissenting Teachers, ' since they use the Lord's-Prayer in Publick Worship, ' and also recommend it to others. ' But I answer, that here is not the least Inconsistency, and Mr. Ben-
net's

net's Inference is manifestly false and unjust. For when the Dissenting Ministers do use the Lord's-Prayer, it is at the Conclusion of one, in which they have expressly mentioned our Saviour's Name, Intercession and Merits : The Lord's-Prayer together with that which preceeded make up but *One Solemn* Address to God ; and in this Address Christ's Name is expressly made mention of ; which every one will readily own is sufficient. For nobody ever suppos'd, that it was necessary to mention our Saviour's Name in every part of our Prayers to God.

If the Lord's-Prayer should be used alone, I will not say it's unlawful ; but I think it is not so proper, nor should I like so it well.

But our Author challenges us to mention one Place of Scripture, ' Wherein this Phrase ' of asking in Christ's Name is so us'd, as P. 39. ' that it must of necessity import, that his ' Intercession or Merits were expressly mentioned. I have said enough to this Matter already. For if according to the genuine natural Sense of those Scriptures (that have been cited already) this be imply'd ; then it's needless to search for any other Examples. And whether our Author's Interpretation or mine be the most genuine, I am heartily willing to refer to the Judgment of all impartial Readers.

Our Author spends the following Chapter, in proving that the Apostles and Primitive Christians join'd in the use of the Lord's-Prayer. But besides his Quotations out of Antiquity, (which I intermeddle not with) I meet with no other Argument, but what has been mentioned before. ' It must therefore be ' granted (says he) that the Apostles did P. 48. ' use the Lord's-Prayer, because they were ' commanded so to do ;' and that particularly they us'd it in their Publick Worship, &c. But others have inverted the Argument, and thought that it never was enjoin'd, because we have not the least intimation

tion that it ever was practised, either by our Saviour himself or by the Apostles. And our Author acknowledges that we never are expressly told in Scripture that they us'd it. But he might not only have said that we have no *express account* of this matter, but also that we have not the least *intimation* thereof? Nor (says our Author) could it reasonably be expected. But I shou'd have thought that one might have very reasonably hop'd to have met with some such intimation as this, if the Command had been so express, and the observance of it so constant and universal as our Author represents it to be. But he gives us the following reason for his Assertion? For (says he) tho' we have mention several times made of the Apostles praying, 'yet the words of their Prayers are only recorded twice, *Acts* 4. 24. and chap. 1. 24, 25. And the Lord's-Prayer might be us'd notwithstanding it be not expressly mentioned there.

It's *possible* indeed they might do so, but there is not the least intimation thereof in the Text. And if the Lord's-Prayer was so strictly enjoin'd, and so universally practis'd, it's not a little strange that when we read of the Apostles praying we have no hint of their using the Lord's-Prayer, neither when the words of their Prayers are recorded, nor when they are not; and that they should give us no intimation, how necessary it was, to use the Lord's-Prayer, in all the Directions we meet with in Scripture about the discharge of this Duty.

' But (says our Author) by the same way
P. 48. ' of reasoning we may conclude, That the
' Apostles never celebrated the Lord's-Supper,
' because we have not one Instance of it in Scripture;
' or that they did not all of them administer Baptism,
' or that they did not sing *Psalms* in their Lord's-Days
' Assemblies.

But

But each of these is very far from being a parallel Case. For our Author I presume will not affirm, that (besides our Saviour's plain Institution) we have no intimation in Scripture of *Baptism* and of the *Lord's Supper* being administred, or of the Usefulness and Necessity of singing of *Psalms*. And yet this he must say, (if he design to speak to the purpose.) For as for our having no account of these Duties being perform'd by some particular Persons, and at some particular times and occasions, this it's plain comes not home to the Matter in hand : Since our Argument is not, that the Lord's Prayer never was us'd by this or the other Disciple, or upon this and the other occasion ; but that we have no intimation of its ever being used by any Person, upon any occasion whatever ; nor the least hint concerning the Usefulness or Necessity of it.

But (says our Author) it was expressly enjoin'd by our Saviour, and therefore was certainly used. *Ans.* This is the very thing in Debate, and what yet remains to be proved. The Words of our Saviour both in *Matthew* and *Luke* don't imply a necessity of using these very Words. The genuine sense of these Texts amounts to no more than this, *When ye pray, either use these very Words, or Words to the very same purpose.* And there are a great many Reasons that may incline us to embrace this Interpretation, and not the least Shadow of a Reason has been offered as yet, why it should be rejected.

The next Chapter is spent in proving that the Apostles and Primitive Christians join'd in the use of *Psalms*, which I am very willing to grant ; but think it not so proper an Instance, for Reasons I have mentioned already, and which I shall not now stay to repeat. I therefore pass on to the following Chapter.

Thirdly (says our Author) I shall prove
 ' that the Apostles and Primitive Christians, P. 79.
 ' join'd in divers precompos'd set Forms of
 ' Prayer, besides the Lord's-Prayer and *Psalms*.

But why our Author should talk of the Apostles joining in Divers Set Forms of Prayer, I don't well understand ; since he pretends to produce but one single Instance out of the *Bible* ; and how little that's to the Purpose, I now proceed to enquire.

The Prayer our Author refers to is that which is recorded in *Acts* 4. 24, &c. This our Author thinks he can evidently prove was a precompos'd Set Form of Prayer. But methinks the contrary is as plain and evident as any thing can be. I am fully persuaded that no unprejudic'd Person, who impartially considers the account which we have of this matter, can ever let it enter into his Thoughts, that this was a precompos'd Set Form of Prayer. But what will not a strong and fruitful Imagination produce, when, influenc'd by Prejudice and Prepossession ? To suppose this was a standing Form well known in the Church, and frequently us'd as occasion offer'd, is a most unlikely Conjecture and a mere Product of a prejudic'd Fancy. And yet our Author says that this *is highly probable, if not certain*. But methinks it's more than probable that this was no Set Form of Prayer at all. For,

First, Is it not unreasonable to suppose that the Apostles themselves were beholden to Forms ? Surely the Gift of Prayer may well be allowed to them, though it should be deny'd to those who succeed them. And has it not been generally acknowledg'd that the Apostles were endow'd with this Gift, though our Adversaries would not allow us to infer from hence, that ordinary Christians also enjoy'd it ? Who can imagine that even the Apostles must sit down, and compose a Form of Prayer suitable to the present occasion, or else make use of one that was already prepar'd to their hand ? Surely they who were endow'd with the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, and were able to speak upon any occasion without Preparation, needed not the Help of a Form. I can't think so meanly of the

the Apostles, as to entertain such a Thought or Opinion as this.

Secondly, It's plain in the Context, that they had no time to compose this Form of Prayer themselves, or at least to give Copies out to all that Company, who are suppos'd to join *vocally* in it; which they could not do without being acquainted with it before hand. We read that as soon as ever they were let go, they went to their own Company, &c. Here's not the least hint of any such Interval, in which this Form of Prayer might be compos'd. And to suppose that this was a standing Form of Prayer or Collect then generally us'd by the Church, is as groundless a Fancy as can be. Especially if we consider,

Thirdly, That this Prayer is manifestly suited to the present Emergency; which being unknown and unforeseen, it's not likely any Set Form of Prayer should be precompos'd so suitable to it. This (says our Author) *is to take that for granted, which they can't prove one Syllable of.* But methinks the truth of this is very apparent, if we consider the Context, and compare this Prayer with what had been immediately related before. That Part of the Prayer which is contain'd in the 24th and following Verses, seems to have a manifest Reference to what we have an Account of in the foregoing part of the Chapter. And *Ker. 29.* say they, *And now, Lord, behold their Threatnings, &c.* What can here be meant by *their Threatnings*, but the Threatnings of *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, &c. which had been taken notice of in the foregoing Verses? *Ver. 21.* So *when they had further threatned them, they let them go, &c.* From whence, I think; it evidently appears, That this was no precompos'd Set Form of Prayer; but a Prayer *then* conceiv'd, and adapted to the present Occasion. And our Author himself elsewhere seems to affirm, that this Prayer was *Particular* and *Extraordinary*, when *P. 28.* he says, 'The Historian do's not relate

‘ all that was spoken to God in Prayer, but only what
 ‘ was *Particular* and *Extraordinary*.

But notwithstanding all the Evidence
 P. 79. which I have brought to the contrary,
 our Author affirms, ‘ That this Prayer
 ‘ was undoubtedly a Precompos’d Set Form.’ Which
 confident Assertion of his is grounded upon that Pas-
 sage of Scripture, *Acts* 4. 24. *They lift up their Voice*
with one accord, and said; that is, (according to our
 Author’s way of Paraphrasing) *they spake aloud, and*
join’d all together with audible Voices; and consequently,
 must needs have us’d a Precompos’d Set Form of
 Prayer. But, *First*, possibly by *Lifting up their Voice*,
 no more may be meant, than barely *they Pray’d*: (Es-
 pecially if we consider that an Audible Voice must be
 made use of, tho’ all did not Pray in an Audible man-
 ner.) Perhaps it would be no difficult matter to
 shew, that such Phrases as these are often so taken in
 Scripture. *Acts* 5. 12, &c. And in the *Abridgment* I
 meet with the following Passage. ‘ And

P. 58. ‘ indeed *Crying to God* has the same Lati-
 ‘ tude with Prayer, which includes both
 ‘ Vocal and Mental.’ And in the preceding Page
 we are told, ‘ That *Crying* do’s not necessarily denote
 ‘ Vocal Prayer. And I think, there is no such great
 difference between *Crying* and *Lifting up the Voice*, but
 if the one be taken for Praying *mentally*, the other
 may be so too. Supposing the Words in the Text
 had been, *They cried to God with one accord;* would not
 this have been liable to the very same Objections
 our Author has made against the other?

Now this seeming Difficulty will immediately va-
 nish, if this Supposition be true. For then by *Lifting*
up their Voice to God with one accord, no more is
 meant, than that they pray’d with joint Consent and
 Desires, or with united Hearts and Affections; which
 I presume they might easily do, without the Use of
 a Form.

Secondly,

Secondly, Supposing that an Audible Voice was really us'd, and that this is the necessary Signification of the forementioned Expression; it's certain, as our Author himself do's acknowledge, 'That the Scriptures sometimes attribute that to a whole Congregation, which is performed only by one single Person in the Name of the rest. Many Instances there are of this kind. But P. 80. then (he says) this is never done, that he knows of, except in those Cases wherein the Thing related requires the Consent of the whole Multitude, but could not conveniently be perform'd or done by every one of 'em in their own Persons.

But this is a needless and groundless Restriction. When Three or more Persons wait upon Her Majesty, to present an Address or Petition to Her; I think it's very proper to say, that *They* presented such an Address to Her Majesty; tho' I suppose one only gave it into Her Majesty's Hand: And yet the rest might have laid their Hands on the Address, and jointly deliver'd the same to Her Majesty. This was neither impracticable, nor inconvenient.

However, I need not stay to enquire, whether or no what our Author says, will hold universally true? But granting it is so; I say, what we are now discoursing about, could not be *conveniently* perform'd by every particular Person; and therefore (according to our Author's own Opinion) we may very well suppose it was done by one, in the Name of the rest. For them to have lifted up all their Voices, even tho' they us'd the very same Words, must (in my Opinion) be somewhat confus'd, and not a little disturbing; and therefore this could not be *conveniently* done by every particular Person. But then, if they pray'd without the Use of a Form; their joining together in such a manner as this, our Author himself will own to be altogether impracticable. And now, having

having prov'd that thus it actually was; I hope our Author will give us leave to suppose, That the Lifting up of the Voice (if that Phrase must be taken in its Literal Sense) 'was perform'd by one in the Name of the rest, who join'd indeed mentally with him, but not in an audible manner.

But there's somewhat which (according to his wonted Assurance) our Author says puts the Matter beyond *all Possibility of a Contradiction*. It's no unusual thing with our Author, to build a great deal of Confidence upon a very weak and slender Foundation: And I now begin to be too well accustomed to it, to be too much surprized at it. He observes, P. 82, 'That they are not only said to lift up their Voice, but to do this (*ὁμοθυμαδόν*) 'with one accord, or all together. I know not why the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν* shou'd be render'd *all together*: It properly signifies *with one and the same Mind*; and it's join'd to the Verb *ἦσαν*, to let us know, that tho' one Person only *vocally* pray'd, yet the rest did *mentally* join and concur.

For my part, I don't see how adding the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, do's add the least Strength to the Argument: For if the whole Multitude may be said *ἀρεῖν τὴν φωνήν*, (to lift up the Voice) when one only did it in the Name, and with the Consent of the rest; then I see no manner of Reason, why they maynt be said to have done it *ὁμοθυμαδόν* (unanimously) too, which only denotes their *Mental* Consent and Concurrence.

But (says our Author) this Adverb implies a Conjunction of more Persons than one, and is particularly apply'd to this Action of theirs, *viz.* their Lifting up the Voice. That the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν* denotes a Conjunction of more Persons than one, none can deny; but then what sort of Conjunction is it? It's plain, this Word do's not necessarily imply any other Conjunction in that Action, which is express'd

press'd by the Verb to which it is join'd; besides a joint and hearty Consent thereunto. For (to keep to the Instance mention'd by our Author himself, which occurs in this very Chapter;) when the Rulers, Elders, Scribes, &c. were gather'd together, and when they had set *Peter* and *John* in the midst, *They ask'd them, by what Power, or by what Name have ye done this?* Ver. 5, 6, 7. Now, tho' it is said that *they ask'd*; yet our Author acknowledges that this was done only by one, in the Name and with the Consent of the rest. Thus also, when they command them to go aside out of the Council, Ver. 15. and when they call them in again, and command them *not to speak at all, nor teach in the Name of Jesus*, v. 18. And when again they farther threaten 'em, v. 21. I presume our Author will not deny that this also was done by some particular Person or Persons, in the Name, and with the Consent of the rest. Now, supposing the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν* had been join'd to these Verbs, I desire to know whether this would have made it Nonsense or no? Supposing it had been *ὁμοθυμαδόν ἐπυνθάνοντο*, they with one Accord propounded this Question to them, or *ὁμοθυμαδόν παρήγγειλαν αὐτοῖς*, or *οἱ δὲ ὁμοθυμαδόν ἀεισπελινοῦμενοι*; wou'd this have been either false or improper, tho' all of 'em did not actually question, charge, or threaten *Peter* and *John*?

I know no *English* Word (not indeed can there be any) that more exactly corresponds to *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, than the Word *unanimously* do's: And yet how common a thing is it for us to say, That such a thing was *unanimously* done by several Persons, tho' many of 'em join'd no other way in the Action, but by consenting thereto, and concurring in their Minds with him or them that perform'd it. But now, according to our Author's Opinion and way of Arguing, a whole Body, or Number of People, can't *unanimously* join in any Action whatever, unless that Action be perform'd severally and personally, by every individual

Member. Which is indeed as absurd as any thing can be. For is it not very proper to say, That a whole Body (for Example, the Members of some Corporation) did *unanimously*, or *with one accord*, draw up a Petition, and present the same to Her Majesty, desiring that such and such Grievances might be redress'd? I say, is not this very proper; tho' the Petition perhaps was drawn up, and presented too by one single Person alone? What Nonsense, what Impropriety's here? Provided only that the rest consented to what this single Person had done; and that it was done in the Name of them all. Or is there the least Impropriety in saying, That the House of Commons, or House of Lords, address'd Her Majesty *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, i. e. *unanimously*, or *with one accord*? But such Instances as these are as needless as they are numerous.

And (if I be not mistaken) there are some Places of Scripture, in which the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν* is join'd to a Verb, without implying that the whole Multitude join'd in the Action express'd by the Verb, any other way, than by jointly consenting thereto: But I shall not stay to make a diligent Search for any such Instances, since I apprehend there is no necessity for them.

But after all it must be observ'd, that this Objection lies only against the second Sense of this Text: If the first Interpretation be true, and by Lifting up the Voice, no more be meant than barely they pray'd; then no Objection at all can be drawn from the Word *ὁμοθυμαδόν*.

I shall only further desire the Reader to observe the Original Words *ὁμοθυμαδόν ἦσαν φωνήν*. The Word *Voice* is in the Singular Number, and the Word *Their* is not in the Original, tho' it be inserted in our Translation. *They unanimously lifted up a Voice*, is the Literal Translation thereof.

Passing over our Author's tedious Discourse concerning the Judgment and Practice of the Ancient Fathers, some Passages in the 18th Chapter are in the next place to be taken into Consideration. In this

Chapter our Author endeavours to shew, Pag. 231.

'That there is no Proof of the Joint Use

'of Prayers conceived Extempore, in the Ancient

'*Jews*, or Primitive *Christian* Church.' That Ex-

tempore Prayers have been us'd very often in secret,

cannot well be deny'd by any ; and therefore our Au-

thor is not unwilling to grant it. Such were the Pray-

ers of *Abraham's* Servant, of *Hannab*, of *Jonab*, and

of our Saviour in the Mountain, and in his Agony,

&c. But these Private Prayers our Author says are

nothing at all to the purpose. Now that

these Instances of Private Extempore Pag. 232.

Prayer don't fully and directly prove the

Use of *Joint* Extempore Prayer, I readily own ; but

that however they are some way serviceable in the pre-

sent Cause, I hope to make appear afterwards.

'Nothing, (says our Author) will serve

'their turn, unless they can produce either Pag. 233.

'a Command to use, or some Instance of

'the use of a Prayer, which was, 1st, most certainly

'conceived Extempore : 2^{dly}, Such as divers persons

'jointly offer'd to God.

But 1st, If one should be extremely incredulous,

perhaps they might deny that even an Express Com-

mand sufficiently demonstrated the performance of the

Action required. It's possible a thing may be enjoin'd

and yet that Injunction not be observ'd. And if this

be but barely possible, then though we suppose the Lord's

Prayer was prescribed as a Form, yet (I think) accord-

ing to our Author's way of arguing, we must scarce

believe that this was practis'd by the Apostles. For

we have no intimation at all of their using this Pray-

er. And it is not simply impossible that they should

either

notice

either mistake this Injunction, or neglect the observance of it.

2dly, If Extempore Prayer was frequently made use of in secret (which our Author seems willingly to grant) then have we not a great deal of Reason to suppose that it was sometimes made use of in publick, though we had neither Command nor Instance of it? Even as our Author will suppose that Forms of Prayer were secretly us'd by the *Jews*, though he can't mention a Precept for it, nor (I believe) produce one single Instance of it. What Reason can be given why Extempore Prayer should be so oft made use of in secret, and never us'd at all in the publick? But Prejudice will make men believe many things which there is no manner of Evidence for; and disbelieve a great many Truths that are grounded upon very substantial Reasons.

2dly, By virtue of those Commands which require Joint-Prayer in the general we may be as effectually oblig'd to the use of Joint-Extempore Prayer, as if that sort of Prayer had been enjoin'd in particular, *viz.* when there is a necessity to join immediately in Prayer to God; and yet the Persons who are to join in Prayer have no Form ready at hand, suited to the present Emergency: And these Occasions so often occur, that it's very strange indeed if many of 'em did not fall out in the space of so many Hundred Years. Yea,

4thly, I appeal to all Impartial Persons, whether all the proper Instances of Joint-Prayer, which we meet within Scripture, be not indeed of this kind; that is, they were Prayers compos'd upon special Occasions, when they had not sufficient time to draw up and distribute such Forms of Prayer as might be suited to the present Emergencies: Nor have we the least Intimation that this ever was attempted by any. As for the Old Testament (to pass other Instances by) I shall only take notice

notice of one, which is mentioned by our Author himself, and that is *Jehosaphat's* Prayer. Let any Impartial Person read over the Context, and then let him judge in the Matter, 2 *Chron.* 20. Can any Unprejudic'd Person imagine that this was either a precomposed Set Form of Prayer, or that it was offered by a single Person alone? The Children of *Moab* and *Ammon*, they come to fight with *Jehosaphat*: Upon which a Fast is proclaimed: The People assemble, *Jehosaphat* comes and stands in the Congregation of *Judah*, &c. v. 5. and then offers up the following Prayer, manifestly adapted to the present Emergency. Is it not then very plain that the People join'd in *Jehosaphat's* Prayer? To what purpose were they assembled, if he went to Prayer alone? 'But (says our Author, Pag. 233.) 'besides the usual Liturgy of *Psalms*, they might offer 'such Prayers as each Man alone judged convenient 'to express his own Humiliation and Desires by. 'As for singing of *Psalms*, it's likely that was but a small part of their Work, if any at all, upon a Day of Fasting and Humiliation. And to suppose that they all assembled together, that each Man might pray *alone*, is extremely absurd and unreasonable: For this might have been much better done in each Man's private Retirement. To say, 'That to officiate in this manner by offering up a Prayer in which the Congregation joined, was a Duty, which as far as appears was 'appropriate to the Priesthood: This, I say, is only to confront a plain Matter of Fact with a groundless Conjecture. To be the Mouth of a considerable number of People in Prayer to God, belongs not now to the Clergy alone, and I know no reason we have to suppose that it was appropriate to the Priesthood under the Law. I suppose a Master of a Family may now, and might then, offer up a Prayer to God, in which all the Family join'd (how numerous soever) even though he was not a Priest.

As for the New Testament, I have shewn already, that that Joint Prayer, *Act. 4. 24, &c.* could not be a precomposed well known Form. To this Instance some other (probable ones) might be added; which our Author has taken the pains to collect to my Hand. But says, 'That there is not the least shadow of proof that these Prayers were conceiv'd Extempore.' I shall trespass so far upon the Reader's Patience, as briefly to review the places our Author has mention'd: And then let any Man persuade himself, if he can, that they were precomposed Set Forms of Prayer. And if they were not precomposed, they must be extempore. For I know of no Medium, no more than our Author. *P. 106.*

Acts 2. 42. The new Converts they continued in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers. Whether there be any probability that these were set Forms of Prayer, I leave to the Judgment of Impartial Persons.

Acts 8. 15. Peter and John, when they came to *Samarita*, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Now I suppose our Author is of the Opinion, that these Apostles prayed by a Form, and consequently that there was a Collect compos'd and appointed for this very purpose, which either was generally used by the Church upon such an Occasion, or else prepar'd by the Apostles themselves at this very Juncture. But alas! how groundless and unlikely Conjectures are these, and how unworthy of the Apostles!

Acts 12. 5. Peter was kept in Prison, but Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. But now is it probable in the lowest degree, that as soon as they heard of Peter's Imprisonment, a new Form was immediately compos'd in the Church upon this occasion? Have we the least intimation of any such thing, or of the Persons who made this Composure? And is it not strange, that new Forms should be made upon this and all other such like

like Occasions, and yet we never have the least Hint of any such thing in the Scripture!

Acts 13. 13. The Prophets and Teachers of the Church of *Antioch* pray'd, when they laid their Hands on *Barnabas* and *Saul*: And *Chap.* 14. 23. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when they had ordain'd Elders in every Church, and had pray'd with Fasting, they commended them to the Lord. Here also I suppose our Author would have us believe, that there were some particular Forms of Prayer appointed to be us'd at the Ordination and solemn Recommendation of Ministers: But he must excuse us if we incline to the contrary Opinion, since it has a great deal more probability in it. Besides, it might be query'd, how every Church came to be so well acquainted with that Form of Prayer which was us'd by *Paul* and *Barnabas* in their Ordination of Elders; and how *Paul* and *Barnabas* came to be acquainted with the Prayers that were us'd by the Prophets and Teachers of *Antioch*? But as to these and other things of the like nature, we must needs be very much in the dark.

Acts 20. 36. *Paul* (when taking his Leave of the *Ephesians*) kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And in the 5th Verse of the following Chapter, he kneeled down on the Shore, and prayed with the *Tyrians*. Now who can imagine that this Apostle had compos'd a Form for himself, which he made use of when he took his Leave of these People? Or if he had, which way should the People who join'd in the same come to be thoroughly acquainted therewith? But what Absurdities will not men run into, when they grow so extremely fond of a groundless Opinion, and are so very tenacious of it?

Acts 27. 35. We read that *Paul* took Bread and gave thanks to God in the Sense of them all, &c. Now who can believe that this was either some Grace which the Apostle constantly us'd at his Meat, or a Form of Thanksgiving drawn up by him upon this occasion;

casion ? Or is there the least Shadow of Reason to believe that all that were on board the Ship were acquainted with this Grace, or Form of Thanksgiving before-hand ? Can we imagine that the Apostles themselves did not so much as crave a Blessing upon their Meat without using a Form ?

But there is yet one Instance remaining which our Author speaks more *particularly* to ; and that is the Prayer which was us'd at the choice of *Matthias* to the Apostleship, *Acts* 1. 24. But (says he) *it's impossible to prove that this was conceiv'd Extempore*. I shall not pretend indeed to give Demonstration thereof. But if we consider that it was adapted to the present Occasion (and so could not be a standing Form of the Church) and also that we have not the least hint of its being compos'd before that very Instant in which it was us'd ; it will appear much more probable that it was an Extempore Prayer, than that it was pre-compos'd. And that it was a *Joint-Prayer* appears from the words of the Text. *And they pray'd, &c. jointly*, and not *severally* and apart, as our Author seems to insinuate, contrary to the manifest Sense of the Text.

And now I am willing to appeal to any impartial Judge whether this Scriptural Proof of the Joint Use of Extempore Prayers, be not as good as any our Author has produced in behalf of precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer. And if a negative Argument be conclusive in every case, then we have perfect Demonstration that none of these Joint-Prayers which we meet with in Scripture, were precomposed well-known Forms. For we have not any Account, nor the least Intimation, that Forms of Prayer were compos'd upon these Occasions. Yea (besides the silence of the Scriptures) there are other Reasons to incline us to believe there were none.

In short then, all the Joint Prayers that we have an Account of in Scripture, are (at least) much more

more likely to have been Extempore ones, than pre-compos'd well known Forms. And therefore if our Author's Argument has any Force in it, I may now very fairly retort it upon him. ' For from what has been said it appears, that it cannot be prov'd from any part of the Scripture, that either the Apostles or Primitive Christians did ever join in the Use of precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer. *Pag. 236.*

Our Author in the following Chapter pretends to shew, ' That the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, never join'd in any Prayers but precompos'd Set Forms only. ' But here our Author does not pretend to bring any direct or positive Proof. But supposing that we can't prove the Joint Use of Extempore Prayer, he thence infers that only precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer were us'd, supposing that a Negative Argument is enough in the Case. I'll give you the Argument as it is summ'd up by our Author himself. ' There is not one single Proof or Instance either in the *Bible*, or in any other Ancient Writer, of the Joint Use of any one Prayer conceiv'd Extempore. But there is both in the *Bible* and many Ancient Writers a great Variety of Proofs and Instances of the Joint Use of precompos'd Set Forms, both amongst the *Jews* before our Saviour's Resurrection, and in the first Ages of the Christian Church. Wherefore I conclude and affirm, That the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians never join'd in any Prayers, but precompos'd Set Forms only. And before he says, Will a Man believe without Proof. If so, I hope *P. 274.* he will gain no Profelytes, but be singular in this foremarkable Instance of Folly.

Ans^w. First, I have already given as good Proof of the Joint Use of Extempore Prayer, as reasonably could be expected; and better Proof than any our
Au-

Author is able to produce in behalf of the Joint Use of precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer. And therefore this Argument is sufficiently answer'd already. But however, supposing that we could bring no Proof at all, nor any undeniable Instances ; yet

Secondly, I think it's very plain, that a negative Argument *in such a Case as this* does signify nothing, or at least is not strictly conclusive. And I gather'd from what our Author had spoken elsewhere that P. 48. he had agreed with me in this Matter.

It must be observed that Prayer in the General is the Duty the Scripture requires ; and praying by a Form, or praying Extempore is but a Mode or Circumstance of it ; the Expediency of which is various according to the different Circumstances of the Person that prays, &c. But now is it not Folly to look for positive Proof or plain Instances of all the particular Modes and Circumstances of our religious Worship ? Must we believe that none ever pray'd at 7 or 8 a Clock in the Morning, or at 9, 10, or 11 at Night, or that none ever pray'd in their Chambers or Families, unless we can produce some particular Instances hereof from the Scripture ? Or suppose we had a great many undeniable Instances of the Apostles and Primitive Christians praying at such a particular Hour, and no Command or Instance at all of their praying at another Hour of the Day ; our Author it's likely would conclude from hence, that they never pray'd but at that time ; and from hence infer the Necessity or Expediency of observing one particular Hour. Will our Author believe that none of the Primitive Christians ever penn'd their Sermons at all, because we have no account hereof in the Scripture, nor is there any Command to this purpose ? And yet I think it much more probable that their Sermons were precompos'd, than their Prayers. If we should conclude that none ever us'd a Form of Prayer in Secret, be-
cause

cause we have no account hereof in the Scripture, no Command nor Instance either in the Old Testament or in the New; whereas we have several very plain Instances of private Extempore Prayers: I say, should we hence infer that none ever us'd a Form of Prayer in secret; would our Author allow of the Inference? I think it can never be prov'd that the Lord's Prayer was prescrib'd as a Form: And yet if it could, this is nothing to other Forms which are only of a Human Composure; and it was never given to those who liv'd in Old Testament Times.

Suppose it were impossible to determine whether the Apostles and Primitive Christians join'd in Pre-compos'd or Extempore Prayers; will our Author infer from hence, that they never join'd either in the one or the other? Or rather, would it not be reasonable to suppose, that they join'd in one of these two ways of Worship, or, it may be, in both; tho we had no Command or Instance to shew either for the one or the other?

If our Author is not able to produce an express Command for the Joint Use of Set Forms of Prayer, nor any undeniable Instances of it; then according to his way of arguing, we may safely conclude that this way of Worship ought not to be practis'd. And whether he has produc'd either the one or the other, I leave to be determin'd by the impartial Reader. If it be egregious Folly in others to believe without Proof, it can be no extraordinary Wisdom in our Author himself.

Further, it must be consider'd, that there is a great deal of difference between one's *withholding* or *suspending* their Belief of a Matter of Fact, and a *positive believing* that there never was such a thing. A negative Argument may suffice for the former in several Cases, but I think it will seldom or ever do for the latter. Thus, for example, if any will have me believe that the Apostle *Paul* or *Peter* preach'd at such a

Place, or baptiz'd such a Person, or the like ; I may justly demand what Reason they have to affirm it, and refuse to believe it, till they have proved it to me some way or other. And yet at the same time I think it would be Rashness in me positively to affirm, that the Apostles never were at such a Place, nor ever did baptize such a Person ; unless I had some direct and positive Evidence of it. Now the Primitive Christians might use Forms, and yet pray extempore too ; for our Author himself does acknowledge, that these are not inconsistent with one another. And therefore though we could give no Instance of their jointly praying extempore, yet this does not *demonstrate* they never did. So that for any *positively to believe* that they never did pray extempore, because they suppose we have no particular Instances of their so doing, is indeed to *believe* without *sufficient* Proof. The most one would think that could be made of it is this, That we ought to *withhold* our Belief, and *suspend* our Judgment upon it. Or if we incline to one Opinion more than another, it must be in proportion to that probable (tho not Demonstrative) Evidence, which may be produc'd in behalf of one Opinion more than another.

I need take little or no notice at all of the following Chapter, since it contains nothing new or material in it. The Design thereof is to shew, P. 298. 'That those precompos'd Set Forms in which
' the Ancient *Jews, &c.* join'd, were such
' as the respective Congregations were accustomed to,
' and thoroughly acquainted with. And for the Proof of this he appeals to what he had spoken before ; because he thinks the very same Instances and Authorities which prove they were precompos'd Forms, do also prove them to be such as the respective Congregations were well accusom'd to, and thoroughly acquainted with. And I must refer the Reader to what I have already said in Answer to our Author's Discourse

course on this matter, and leave him to judge, whether our Author has sufficiently prov'd, that *all* the Joint Prayers of the Ancient *Jews* and Primitive Christians were *well known* Forms; yea, whether I have not sufficiently shewn the contrary.

However, granting it to be true, that they were acquainted before hand with those Prayers which they are suppos'd to have constantly used; yet this was only *per accidens* (if that Expression may be allow'd me), and not because the previous knowledge thereof was any way useful or necessary, or did not rather hinder than help their Devotion. And therefore our Author's arguing from it (supposing the Matter of Fact to be true, is in my Opinion very unjust and unfair.

Some of the Dissenters, I'm sure, think Novelty and Variety is pleasing and affecting as well in *Psalms* as in Prayers or Sermons: And yet they constantly use *David's Psalms* in the publick. So that the Expediency of a previous Knowledge can't be inferr'd from any such Practice as this.

At last we are come to the most material part of the Controversy, *viz. The Imposition of a National Precomposed Liturgy.* The Warrantableness of which, our Author thinks sufficiently appears from what he has prov'd in the foregoing part of his Book. But now, tho' this be the very Knot of the Controversy, yet our Author touches but very lightly upon it, and (in my Opinion) argues the most weakly about it. I have already overthrown the Foundation upon which the Superstructure is built, and therefore need be at no great pains to pull down the Superstructure it self. I have shewn already, that we have no *clear* Ground to believe that the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, did join in Divers precomposed Set Forms of Prayers, *properly* so called, (at least, of Human Composure.) And on the other hand, I have shewn, (I hope, to the Satisfac-

on of all Impartial Judges), That the Apostles and Primitive Christians, as well as the Ancient *Jews*, did join in some Prayers that were not precompos'd, at least such as they were not *well accusom'd to, nor thoroughly acquainted with.*

Our Author has produced no *proper* Scriptural Instances of their *actually* joining in a precompos'd Set Form of Prayer, except one single Instance alone, *Acts* 4. Besides which he alledges two Commands for the Use of two particular Forms of a Divine Compofure, one out of the Old Testament, the other out of the New. Now is it not strange that Mr. *Bennet* should ever imagine this to be a sufficient Proof, that this way of Worship was *constantly* and *universally* practis'd, by the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, and the Primitive Christians? How strange an Inference is this, how wide the Consequence?

Besides I have also shewn, that the single Instance produc'd by our Author in favour of his Opinion, does really make directly against him: And I have also shewn, that we have no command to use that very Form of Words contained in the Lord's-Prayer. And this is a sufficient Reply to all that is said in this Chapter.

However, supposing the Truth of our Author's main Proposition, I shall in the next Place briefly consider his arguing from it.

First, ' Their Practice proves, That a
Pag. 321. ' precompos'd Liturgy was constantly im-
' pos'd on the Laity. As certainly as the
' Establish'd Liturgy is now impos'd on the Laity of
' the Establish'd Church, and as the Joining in Pray-
' ers conceiv'd Extempore is now impos'd on the
' Dissenting Congregations ——— Because none can
' join in the Worship of the respective Congregati-
' ons, unless he will submit to the joint use of that
' particular way of Worship, which that particular
' Congregation observes.

If

If we pray at all ; we must either pray Extempore, or by a Form. So that these are requir'd in general, and the pitching upon one of the two is no more than the necessary Determination of a Mode or Circumstance of Religious Worship, which is left undetermin'd by God. And as for such Impositions as these (if our Author will call them so) none will or can be against them, but such as are against the Duty it self. It's just such an Imposition as praying at a particular Time, or Place, &c. Because when such a particular Time or Place is pitch'd upon by an Assembly, they who would join with that Congregation in their Religious Worship, must either come to that Place, at such a time, or else they can have no Communion with them.

And as for our way of Worship, we desire none to attend thereupon, but such as freely make choice of the same, as that which they find by their Experience tends most to their Edification. We are very willing to leave those to their Liberty, who think they can reap more Benefit by joining in a Set Form of Prayer. If we pray at all, it must be in one of these Ways. Now tho' we prefer praying Extempore our selves, yet we are willing that all should be left to their Liberty. And if any Persons should be so circumstantiated, as that this should really prove a Hardship upon them ; it's plain it is *unavoidable*, and therefore we are not culpable for it ; no more than we are for assembling at such a time and place as is most proper and convenient for our selves, tho' it should be inconvenient to several others. They to whom the Time and Place are inconvenient, must either repair to another Assembly, or else submit to these Inconveniences, which plainly are unavoidable.

I shall only add, that there is a great deal of difference between the constant use of precompos'd Set Forms of Prayer ; and being ty'd up to *One particular*

particular Liturgy, without being allow'd the least Liberty of varying from it. To be oblig'd to use this *particular way of Worship*, and to be oblig'd *constantly* to use the *same particular Liturgy*, are vastly different Things. Now that the latter was the Practice of the *Ancient Jews, &c.* our Author (I think) has not once attempted to prove : And yet this Practice only is exactly parallel to that of the Established Church. Our Author goes on.

' Their Practice shews that a precompos'd P. 322. ' Liturgy was impos'd on the Clergy ; that ' is, the Clergy were oblig'd to the use of a ' precompos'd Liturgy in their Publick Ministrations. I do not say there was any Canon or Law— ' But they were oblig'd by Custom, as much as by ' a Law ; and their Liberty was as effectually determin'd by that Custom, as by a Law.

But there's a vast difference between a voluntary Compliance with a usual Custom and Practice (if lawful and expedient,) and being compell'd to the constant use of an indifferent thing by a pretended Authority against our own Inclination : As much as there is between my dressing my self after such a manner, because it's the Fashion which prevails in the Nation I live in ; and my being constrain'd to wear such a Habit by some imperious Neighbours, who have no right to impose upon me. I hope I may comply with the one, and yet refuse to comply with the other, without being guilty of Self-Contradiction. In the one Case my Civil Liberty is plainly invaded, but not at all in the other.

It's certain that a Concurrence of Circumstances may do that, which no human Authority can. An indifferent thing lays aside its natural Indifferency when it is thus circumstantiated ; but no indifferent thing can be made necessary *merely* by the Command of Man. And therefore tho' it be very true, that our Liberty is *effectually determin'd* by such a Circumstance :

cumstance: Yet there is a manifest difference between such a *Determination*, and our being *compell'd by others constantly* to use or omit an indifferent thing, when there is no Reason for it at all. The one may be, and really is an unjust Imposition, and an Infringement of our Christian Liberty, whereas it's plain the other is not. For a voluntary Determination of our Practice according to Prudential Reasons, is the *Exercise*, not the *Breach* of our Christian Liberty.

The Apostle Paul comply'd with the Lawful Customs of all the Churches he had occasion to communicate with, and *became all things to all men; that he might gain some*: But if any of his Fellow-Apostles (or any other Human Authority) would have bound him up to the *constant* Use of some indifferent Things, in *all Cases* whatever; there's good Reason to think he would not have yielded so ready a Compliance.

' Thus (says our Author) our Dissenting Teachers are oblig'd not to P. 323.
' use the Establish'd Liturgy, as certainly as the Conforming Clergy are oblig'd to use it. But why so? Have they ever yet *solemnly Subscrib'd and Declar'd*, That they *never* would pray, but *Extempore*; or that they *never* would use the Established Liturgy? If their Judgments should alter, or they be under different Circumstances, are they not entirely free? As long as they are under the same Circumstances which at present they are in, and as long as they remain of the same Opinion and Judgment, it's their Duty not to use the Establish'd Liturgy. They in their own Judgments prefer their own Way of Worship before the Established Liturgy; and upon good Grounds they're persuaded, that the former will be more acceptable and beneficial to those who attend upon them, than the latter would be: And upon this they resolve (and

it's plainly their Duty) not to make use of the Establish'd Liturgy. They freely determine themselves, according as they have sufficient Reason to do ; and are not impos'd upon by another, and compell'd not to use the Establish'd Liturgy, without any Reason at all. The Dissenting Ministers omit the Use of the Establish'd Liturgy, because Christian Prudence directs them to do so ; and not for fear of losing their Maintenance, as our Author basely insinuates : For if they were so much sway'd by such Motives as these , their best way wou'd be to Conform, and then they might constantly use the Establish'd Liturgy, and effectually serve their own Interest too.

But our Author will another way too make it appear, That the Practice of the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, &c. warrants the Imposition of a Precompos'd Liturgy.

'For (says our Author) this is most P. 341, 342. 'evident, That they thought the Use 'of a Precompos'd Liturgy highly expedient. ——— And their concurrent Judgment is 'too great to be withstood by any Person or Society of Men ; and a fit Precedent for the Christian 'World in those Days to follow. And consequently, the Use of a Precompos'd Liturgy is in these 'Days highly expedient. ——— Wherefore, if in 'these Days the Use of a Precompos'd Liturgy 'would not prevail, so much as it do's, if it were 'not impos'd ; it's extremely plain, That there is 'a Necessity of Imposing a Precompos'd Liturgy. To all which I return the following Answers.

First, Our Author has oft indeed *said*, that this Way of Worship was universally practis'd by the Ancient *Jews*, &c. but *once Proving* is better than *twenty times Saying*. I might therefore wait for the Proof of this Assertion of his, which perhaps he has reserv'd for his next, for I can find nothing like it in this.

Secondly,

Secondly, Our Author's own Argument, I think, may thus be retorted upon him. The Apostles and Primitive Christians us'd that Way of Worship which was most expedient. But now it's certain, that *Extempore* Prayer is accompany'd with many Advantages, if Persons are abilitated for it, as the Apostles, &c. undoubtedly were: And therefore we have good Reason to believe, that this Way of Worship was certainly practis'd by them. Our Author supposes, That *their* Way of Worship was universally practis'd by the Apostles, &c. and from thence infers the Expediency of it: But I think, from the certain Expediency of *our* Way of Worship, we may with far more Truth and Reason infer, that it was practis'd by the Apostles, &c.

Thirdly, Supposing that Precompos'd Forms of Prayer were universally used by our Saviour, his Apostles, &c. yet how do's it follow from hence, that this Way of Worship is the most proper and expedient in every Age and Part of the World; and consequently ought to be impos'd? Is it not plain, that the Ancient *Jews*, our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians, did constantly (as far as appears) and universally preach without Notes? But will our Author infer from hence, That this way of Preaching is most expedient in all Cases and Ages, as being most persuasive and powerful? And shou'd their Governors take occasion from hence to restrain both him and his Brethren from ever Reading a Sermon in Publick, I suppose our Author and his Brethren would be very loth to submit to so hard an Imposition as this? And yet (in my Opinion) his way of Arguing concludes as strongly for this, as it do's for the other. Besides, if this way of Arguing be good, how comes our Author to kneel at the Sacrament? Is not this contrary to the Practice of the Ancient *Jews*, (at their *Passover*) of our Saviour, his Apostles, and the Primitive Christians?

Surely,

Surely, according to this way of Arguing, some other Gesture than Kneeling should be impos'd: And how will the *Anabaptists* triumph, if this way of Arguing be own'd to be just and true? How can our Author justify the Practice of Sprinkling, without overthrowing the Principles he proceeds upon in this Chapter? Methinks according to this way of Arguing, Dipping ought to be impos'd, if this be not done already in the *Rubrick* relating thereto, tho' universally neglected by the Establish'd Clergy.

But to return a direct Reply to the Argument; it must be observ'd, That to *Use a Form*, or to *Conceive a Prayer* Extempore, is not the *Duty of Prayer it self*, but only a *Mode or Circumstance* of it. And this is acknowledg'd by our Author himself, when he says, p. 2, 3. 'Whether a man uses a Set Form of Words, in praying to Almighty God, or else prays to him without a Set Form of Words, yet he do's truly and properly pray to him either way. Now, who ever thought that the Example of our Saviour, his Apostles, &c. in *Circumstantial Matters* was obligatory, much less that it was perpetually and universally so? Who do's not take the Liberty in such Cases as these, of receding from the Example and Practice of our Saviour and his Apostles? And I am persuaded, our Author is the first that ever blamed, or condemn'd them for this. Yea, even our Saviour and his Apostles themselves might comply with that Custom and Practice which prevail'd at that time; and yet be free to comply with the contrary Custom or Practice, had they liv'd in a different Age or Part of the World.

And indeed, I can as soon reconcile Light and Darkness together, as make a good Agreement between our Author's Arguing here, and what is deliver'd in the 144th, 145th, and 146th Pages of his *Abridgment*. To transcribe the whole, would be

too tedious to the Reader, as well as my self; and therefore I shall only set down some of the most remarkable Passages therein. The Author is there defending the Practice of Kneeling at the Sacrament, and answering the Objection against it, drawn from the Example of our Saviour and his Apostles. To which Objection he returns several Answers, which very easily may be apply'd to the Case before us.

1. Naked Examples-- have not the Force of Laws perpetually obliging the Conscience. 2dly. We are bound to imitate Christ only in those Things which he has commanded: But where there is no Command, there is no Necessity. 3dly. The bare Example of Christ is no Warrant for us to go by: Unless we find some general or common Reasons, we have no Warrant to follow their Examples. And when such Reasons do appear, then it's not the Example alone that obliges us, but Reason that approves the Example. 4thly. It's absurd to talk of Christ's Example apart from all Law and Rule, and to make that alone a Principle of Duty distinct from the Precepts of the Gospel.

4thly, It's plain, that our Author's way of Arguing will also conclude, that it's highly expedient, that a Book of Homilies shou'd be impos'd. For I hope our Author will own, That it's highly expedient that a Minister's Sermons should be precompos'd; which is the very Foundation he builds his following Inference on: And then at this rate, to what purpose has God instituted the Ministerial Office, or qualify'd any for it, by furnishing them with necessary Gifts and Endowments? Wherefore are these given to Ministers, if they must not be improved by them, to the Benefit of those who attend upon their Administrations? Have we not good Reason to suppose, that God has qualify'd his Ministers for Publick Prayer, as well as for their other Performances? And why then must they

they not be allow'd to compose their own Prayers, as well as their Sermons?

P. 343. ' And (says our Author) if their Practice warrants the Imposition of a Precompos'd Liturgy, it do's for the same Reason warrant the Imposition of a Precompos'd National Liturgy. But for more Reasons than one, I think it very plain, That their Practice might warrant the one, and yet be no sufficient Warrant at all for the other. For,

1. One particular Liturgy may be suitable to one Congregation, and yet not to all that are in the Nation. And consequently, tho' the Use of such a Liturgy should be expedient in such a Congregation; yet this will not warrant the Imposition of a National one. Different Congregations are under different Circumstances; and therefore the same invariable Liturgy cannot well be suitable to them all.

2dly, If a Liturgy be impos'd upon all the Assemblies that are in the Nation, then they who scruple this way of Worship, or this particular Liturgy, must either absent from all Publick Religious Worship, or else attend upon it with no small Dissatisfaction: But it's a different Case when a particular Liturgy is only us'd by one Congregation; for then they who scruple or dislike it, may repair to another Assembly. Now though it should be granted that this way of Worship, or such a particular Liturgy, is really more proper and decent, yet it will not follow from hence that it is so absolutely necessary, as that persons had better never give God any Publick Service or Worship at all, than not to do it after this particular manner. And therefore particular Congregations using a Liturgy, will never prove the lawfulness or Expediency of imposing a National one.

P. 344. Our Author next would persuade us that such an Imposition is no great Grievance.

Grievance either to the Clergy or Laity. But I think it's a very great Grievance both to the one and the other, to be ty'd up to the Invariable Use of one particular Liturgy, especially, when by the same way of reasoning, they may be confin'd to a Book of Homilies too. And thus the Clergy may be restrain'd from the exercise of their Ministerial Gifts and Abilities, and the Laity be depriv'd of that Means of Edification which God himself has appointed.

And as for the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation, I know not how the former come to be *our Governors*, or the latter *our Representatives*: Neither do I know what Authority either the one or the other have, to compose our Sermons or Prayers for us. So that we are neither 'oblig'd to use the Establishment Liturgy in point of Obedience, nor have 'we laid it upon our own Shoulders; and therefore may justly account the Imposition of it a very great Hardship.

But our Author's Zeal transports him so far, that he fancies it would infinitely promote the Peace of the Church, and the good of Souls, to have the whole World join in the Use of one and the same precomposed Liturgy.

But this, I am afraid, instead of doing infinite Good to the Church, would do an unspeakable Damage: I doubt this would greatly hinder the Edification of Souls, and render both Clergy and Laity extremely lazy and formal. Besides, I always thought heretofore that nothing had been omitted in Scripture, which was *constantly* and *universally* necessary. Whatever is fit to be the Matter of a *Perpetual* and *Universal* Law, is certainly enjoin'd in the Scriptures: To deny this is to accuse them of Insufficiency.* If

* *Answ. to Thom. against Bennet, p. 165. 'I grant that the Scriptures are the only and sufficient Rule of Worship, as to all things generally and universally necessary.*

the same particular Liturgy be *perpetually* and *universally* necessary, doubtless such a Liturgy had been compos'd and enjoin'd by our Saviour himself, or some of his Inspired Apostles. Such a Neglect as this (upon this Supposition) cant' well be reconcil'd with the Faithfulness, Wisdom and Goodness of our Redeemer.

Before I conclude, I shall sum up our Author's Arguments, and present them in short to the view of the Reader. 'The Ancient *Jews* they join'd in several *Psalms*, which were precomposed; and are commanded to use a Form of Prayer at the Expiation of an uncertain Murther. Our Saviour he frequented the Temple and Synagogues, commands his Disciples to say his own Prayer: 'The Apostles and Primitive Christians they join'd in Singing of *Psalms* which were precomposed; and the whole Company, *Acts* 4. join'd vocally in that Prayer which is there recorded: These were such Forms of Prayer as we can't but suppose they very well knew: Therefore, since we have no Command or Instance for their joining in *Extempore* Prayer, we must conclude, That they never join'd in any Prayers, but such Precomposed Set Forms as they were well accustomed to, and throughly acquainted with. From whence it follows, that this Way of Worship is in their Opinion most proper and expedient, and consequently may be impos'd: 'Yea, therefore the same particular invariable Liturgy, may be impos'd upon all the Clergy and Laity that are in the Nation, yea, upon all that are in the World.

In answer to which I have shown, *First*, That we have no proper pertinent Command, or Scriptural Instances of the use of precomposed Forms in Publick Prayer to God; and particularly that it can't be prov'd that the Lord's Prayer was prescrib'd as a Form, and design'd as such for perpetual use; and
that

that the Prayer in *Acts* 4. could not be a precompos'd well known Form.

Secondly, That our having no Command or Instance of the joint use of Extempore Prayer, does not sufficiently prove that there never really was such a Practice.

Thirdly, That we have some very plain, and other very probable Instances in Scripture, of the joint use of such Prayers as were not precompos'd, much less *well known* Forms.

Fourthly, I have shewn, That tho' this was the constant Practice of our Saviour, his Apostles, &c. Yet their Example in this Case is not obliging to us; nor will it follow from hence that they thought this way of Worship to be proper and expedient in every Age and Part of the World, or that they judg'd Forms of Prayer to have any Intrinsic Usefulness in them.

Fifthly, I have shewn, That it can't be inferr'd from the Expediency of this way of Worship, that it is also proper and convenient to tie Persons up to the constant and invariable Use of the same particular Liturgy.

Sixthly, Nor can it hence be inferr'd, that it's proper and expedient that a Minister's Prayers should be prescrib'd by some others, and not compos'd by himself as well as his Sermons.

Lastly, I have shewn, That tho' it should be own'd that this way of Worship, and one particular Liturgy be proper and expedient for one particular Congregation: Yet it will not follow from hence, that the same way of Worship or particular Liturgy may be conveniently impos'd upon a whole Nation, much less upon the whole World.

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